

Minutes of the 2nd Annual Conference of the New Jersey Statewide Network for Cultural Competence

The New Jersey Statewide Network for Cultural Competence (NJSNCC) held its 2nd Annual Conference on Oct. 19, 2012 at the Sayreville Fire Academy. The Conference theme was “Model Communication Strategies for a MultiCultural Society: How Health and Human Service Providers Can Better Serve New Jersey’s Diverse Communities and Foster Health Equity”.

Bill Gaventa, NJSNCC Co-chair, opened the conference session by welcoming participants, guests and moderators to the conference. Mr. Gaventa also gave introductory remarks about the NJSNCC and its mission. Mr. Gaventa is from the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities and the UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

Dr. Robert Like provided an overview of the conference by defining the concept of health equity and the role of the OMH Regional Health Equity Council for Region II, identifying several national and New Jersey initiatives to eliminate disparities in health and health care, and discussing the importance of cultural competence, cultural humility, and effective communication in caring for diverse populations. He described US Cultural Competency Legislation, the Joint Commission’s accreditation requirements and OMH CLAS standards, and selected resources that are helping clinicians, health care organizations, and service delivery systems provide culturally and linguistically appropriate health care.

There were 4 panels from various groups who presented their initiatives, experiences, and best practices in helping meet the needs of an increasingly diverse community. Family members were also involved as panel members. Each panel was moderated by a member of the NJSNCC.

The first panel represented the Primary Care/Community Health Perspective, and was headed by Dr. Ruth Perry from the Trenton Health Team. Dr. Perry’s team discussed their strategic initiatives which included expanding access to primary care, community-wide care coordination, engaging the residents of Trenton in their own health care by conducting one-on-one interviews, and expanding infrastructure for an urban ACO (accountable care organization). A community member presented her experiences while in residence at the Kingsbury Towers, one of the ‘hot spots’ in Trenton. This panel was moderated by Helen Dao from DAO Consulting Services, Inc.

The second panel represented the hospital perspective and was headed by Mr. Wayne Boatwright from Meridian Health Care. Meridian discussed their service area demographics and the top 10 patient non-English language preferences. The team discussed its diversity mission, which includes strategic diversity imperatives and buy-in from senior leadership and their Board, collaborations with their Diversity Team, and community-focused efforts. Meridian’s Cultural Diversity Services includes cultural competence training as well as awareness/sensitivity training courses. They have a wide array of language assistance programs, such as in-person, sign language, video remote and telephonic interpretations, and document translation. This panel was moderated by Dr. Robert Like from the Center for Healthy Families and Cultural Diversity of UMDNJ- Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

The third panel gave participants a view of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network’s (SPAN) resources to help assess and plan for language access and for cultural and linguistic competence. This team was

headed by Mercedes Rosas. The team introduced the Traducelo Ahora Project, an internet-based Spanish-English translation program, which enhances communication between Spanish speakers and agencies that serve children and families. The program has impacted Spanish-speaking parents in enhancing their communication skills with teachers and the development of bilingual language skills. The panel was moderated by Jagdish Vasudev from the New Americans Program of United Way of Central Jersey.

The fourth panel represented the disability perspective and was coordinated by Jane Dunham of the National Black Disability Coalition. The team discussed their efforts in engaging communities as allies in non-ableist and anti-racist expressions of disability justice, defining uses of specific terminology in texts, liberty, performatives and enactments. They have been working towards taking the concepts of disability justice out of traditional advocacy and into the world of black civil rights organizations. The panel was moderated by Sophia Rossofsky of Diversity Experts, Inc.

An on-going highlight of the conference was the graphic recording done by Michael Steinbruck from the Boggs Center as he worked to capture the imagery and symbols of the presentations in drawing, color and art. The recording couples words and imagery to enhance participants' understanding and ability to make linkages between ideas and concepts.

The Conference was co-sponsored by **United Way of Central Jersey**. Both **Amerigroup** and **United Health Care** also provided major funding as sponsors of the conference.

A total of 13 exhibitors from both private and public sectors were represented. These were agencies and companies providing educational resources and trainings on culturally appropriate services, language, treatments, support, and advocacy for differently abled individuals and groups. There were approximately 90 people who attended.

Attendees rated the conference very highly and offered lots of ideas for future sessions.

Powerpoint presentations and graphic recording are attached.

Submitted to the Steering Committee by:

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